AUTUMN NIGHTS IN THE THEATRES

CECIL CUNNINGHAM IN "DANCING AROUND"

MARTHA HEDMAN IN "THE HEART OF A THIEF"

LAURA HOPE CREWS IN "THE PHANTOM BRIDE."

THE NEW PLAYS OF THE WEEK.

Managers Show No Loss of Courage, but Will Have Six New Offerings.

MONDAY—Hudson Theatre—"The Heart of a Thief," play of New York life by Paul Armstrong, with Martha Hedman in the leading role. First play of Mr. Armstrong ever produced by Charles Frohman.

Booth Theatre—"The Money Makers," the latest drama of Charles Klein, acted by a company headed by Emmet Corrigan and Alexandra Carlisle.

Joan Sawyer's Persian Garden—Opening of the season with dances by Miss Sawyer and Nigel Barrie.

TUESDAY—Belasco Theatre—Leo Ditrichstein opens season as the star of "The Phantom Rival," which he adapted from the Hungarian of Ferenc Molnar.

WEDNESDAY—"Evidence" at the Lyric Theatre, with Aubrey Smith in the leading role.

SATURDAY—Winter Garden—"Dancing Around," the winter extravaganza, with Al Jolson as its star.

The Playhouse—"My Lady's Dress," by Edward Knoblauch, with Mary Boland and Leon Quartermain in the leading roles. Produced by Joseph Brooks.

"The Heart of a Thief," the first Paul Armstrong play ever produced by Charles Frohman, will have its first performance at the Hudson Theatre tomorrow night, with Martha Hedman in the chief part. The piece is in four acts and as many scenes. It is described as a serious endeavor "to illustrate dramatically local high life and low; its matter is entirely of to-day; and its intent, whatever its achievement, is to expound certain social aspects of New York to New York."

Twenty-five persons make up the company, which, besides Miss Hedman, includes Anne Sutherland, Dan Collyer, Paul Doucet, W. A. Whitecar, Mary Mitmann, W. J. Kane, P. C. Foy and others.

Martha Hedman will play *Anna Svanjen*, a young Swedish girl. She will make her first New York appearance after an absence of over a year, during which she was acting principal parts with Sir George Alexander at the St. James Theatre, London. Miss Hedman's first appearance in New York was in the chief feminine role in "The Attack" in support of John Mason.

The action of the new piece runs through a variety of scenes. It begins in the woman's wing of the Tombs, New York, and continues through such scenes as tango halls and New York uptown apartments. Martha Hedman plays the role of a woman driven into thievery by the malevolence of others and her immediate environment.

Charles Klein's latest play, "The Money Makers," which will be produced by Selwyn & Co. at the Booth Theatre to-morrow night, will be acted by Emmet Corrigan, Alexandra Carlisle, Margaret Wycherly, Eva Condon, Wilton Taylor, Eugene O'Brien, Dodson Mitchell, Felix Krembs, Calvin Thomas, Echlin Gayer, Joseph Adelman, Walter Kingsford, Edward Donnelly, Alfred Fisher, Lionel Bevans, Prentiss Evans and Theodore von Eltz.

David Belasco announces the opening of the regular Belasco Theatre season on Tuesday evening. Then he will present Leo Ditrichstein as a star in a new play by Ferenc Molnar, entitled "The Phantom Rival." Mr. Ditrichstein has made the American version of the play from the original Hungarian. The play is in three acts. The opening of the regular Belasco Theatre season this year is doubly interesting since it will serve to introduce Mr. Ditrichstein as a star.

For this important step in the life and career of this actor of the most varied experience Mr. Belasco has chosen a play that requires just the grip on the art of acting that Mr. Ditrichstein long has been recognized as possessing to an unusual degree. As one of the most finished and gifted artists on the American stage Leo Ditrichstein has achieved a large measure of success in the plays in which Mr. Belasco has presented him.

Mr. Belasco has surrounded his newest star with a cast which includes Laura Hope Crews, Malcolm Williams, John Bedouin, Lee Millar, Lila Barclay, Frank Westerton, Anna McNaughton and Ethel Marie Sasse.

"Evidence" will be acted at the Lyric Theatre on Wednesday night. The company is headed by Aubrey Smith. Concerning the drama the following information, plainly intended for sentimental critics, has been issued from the office of the theatre:

"In the announcement that 'Evidence,' the new drama which has just been produced out of town and is shortly to be seen in New York, is a play of the heart is a double implication. The second meaning has to do with the circumstances under which the play was written. They make up a story that is as fascinating as the play itself.

"In the first place, it may have been noted that the authors of 'Evidence' are named as J. and L. du Rocher Macpherson. These two are brother and sister, and the brother's initial is given first because it also stands for Jean, the name of a sister dead these several years. Jean comes in because it was she who planned the play in every detail before her death, and its completion by her living brother and sister is their tribute to her memory.

"The situation is so unique in the annuals of playwriting that it deserves an unusual attention, quite apart from its great value as a human story. Playwriting was the burning ambition of Jean's life, and she gave her whole energy to it; while her brother and sister, quite out of sympathy with the confining character of literary work, spent their time in athletic pursuits out of doors. As Jean worked on her efforts gradually won recognition, and no less a personage than Sir George Alexander pronounced her a genius. But neglect of nature also began to tell and poor Jean's health faded away and in a short time she died. From all accounts she was a beautiful character, and it was no wonder that her surviving brother and sister loved her. Both would gladly have sacrificed much could she have had just a little longer of life. Soon after Jean's death it became apparent that much of the work to which she had really given her life would be in vain unless the unfinished scripts she left behind were carried on to completion, so brother and sister joined hands in the vow that they would consummate her achievement. Several years after Jean's death the work is now done and the new play 'Evidence' is a part.

"This also explains why details are not given of the other successful plays that are really by J. and L. du Rocher Macpherson, Scottish authors, living in London. They are in the profession to leave a lasting memorial to Jean and having done that intend to retire to their respective ambitions, which are far afield."

Saturday has been selected as the opening night for the new Winter Garden production "Dancing Around," which, like the typical Winter Garden musical spectacle, is a pretentious production which embraces a little of everything. The basis is numerous favorite players, hordes of pretty girls, popular music and two or three thrills of a melodramatic nature. It will serve to bring Al Jolson back to Broadway in an unusually representative cast, including Bernard Granville, Cecil Cunningham, Melville Ellis, Lucy Weston, Mary Robson, Kitty Doner, Eileen Molyneux, Georgie O'Ramey, Aimee Dalmores, Olga Cook, Mildred Manning, Doyle and Dixon, Fred Leslie, Frank Carter, Clifton Webb, Earl Fox, Phil Branson, Blanche Wendell, Olga Hempstone, Rita Bates, Doris Eason, Eleanor Brown, Violet Rochlitz, Mae Dealy and others.

The dialogue and lyrics of the new play are by Harold Atteridge, who has done the same service for four or five previous Winter Garden shows. Sigmund Romberg and Harry Carroll are the composers. The production has been staged by J. C. Huffman, while Jack Mason is responsible for arranging the dances. Melville Ellis has designed the costumes and promises many startling and original effects.

Losing all self-control the press agent allows himself full swing in the following magnificent peroration.

"'Dancing Around' is in twelve scenes. Several are said to be marvels of stage splendor. Having shown a racing auto and train, a burning ship at sea, the sailing of an ocean liner and other novel effects in previous Winter Garden offerings, the present production has for its melodramatic piece de resistance a race between an express train and a locomotive and a fascinating black and white effect.

"The role allotted to Mr. Jolson gives him the widest possible range for the display of his talents. First he is seen in the familiar role of *Gus*, valet to an army officer. A reverse in his social status compels him to seek employment as a hotel clerk and while so engaged he appears, in quick succession, as twelve distinct characters. In a later scene Mr. Jolson will remove his cork cuticle and for the first time in his career is to play in white face. This character is that of an ultrafashionable dressmaker and gives Jolson an opportunity to prove that he is an excellent farceur. His work in this role is said to be not unlike that of the late Stuart Robson. Among the new comers are Kitty Doner, who dances with wonderful agility; Mary Robson, late of "The Girl on the Film"; Lucy Weston, the English comedienne; Eileen Molyneux of the Alhambra, London, and others.

Al Jolson, who is returning to the Winter Garden in "Dancing Around," recently told how when at the age of 14 he ran away from home to join a circus.

"I had a difficult time to persuade the circus manager that I could be of any use, but after dancing and turning hand springs for him he decided that I might travel, but without any salary. I soon found that the manager needed me very much because he soon had me doing everything and he took special delight when on announcing the concert he would call particular attention to Master Albert Jolson, champion buck and wing dancer of the world.

"The buck and wing dances, however, did not finish me for the day because after the final performance I helped pack up and then carried water for the ponies and drove a wagon to the train. I haven't forgotten the experiences, although if it came to advising boys today I would certainly discourage them from following this line of work. Circus people cover much territory and that is about all they get, but the circus taught me to face an audience and to speak lines and it was not long before I had put together a monologue of my own and then armed with sufficient nerve I broke away from the circus and began playing dates in vaudeville.

"I always worked white face, singing songs, telling stories and dancing. One Monday I was sent over to Keeney's Theatre in Brooklyn to report for rehearsal. Mr. Keeney himself was on the stage when I stepped up to the orchestra leader and gave him my music.

"'See here, young man,' said Mr. Keeney, 'we've got another straight man on the bill and there's too much singing. You're a Southerner, aren't you?'

"I replied that I was and wondered why he should ask such a question.

"'You black up this afternoon,' continued Mr. Keeney, 'and do your monologue in black face.'

"I had no alternative in the matter as I needed the money, and without comment I made my first appearance as Al Jolson, black face comedian, and I've blacked up ever since. It is funny how things happen to you in this business."

One of the strongest dramas by Herman Sudermann and strangely a play never before produced in New York "Stein unter Steinen" (Stone Amongst Stones), will be the first offering of the excellent German Stock Company on Wednesday night, October 7.

The famous drama, a play treating the old ex-convict problem from a new angle, made a decided hit on the German stage. In the cast are Heinrich Marlow, Grete Meyer, Flora Arndt, Max Juergens and many others.

POINTS IN THE WEEK'S NEW PLAYS

By LAWRENCE REAMER.

IT would be difficult to find a fresher and less hackneyed play than "Consequences," which delighted its audience on Thursday night at the Comedy Theatre. It was in this same playhouse that "Fanny's First Play" interested the public for a season. It is not quite credible that Mr. Rubinstein's work will endure so long, although its merits entitle it to genuine favor. The case is different, however, with Shaw. Four out of every five spectators at the Comedy during the long run of Mr. Shaw's play felt it their bounden duty to laugh. Everybody laughs at Shaw or they are hopelessly out of the mode. So the crackling of thorns under a pot was heard loud and long at the Comedy while this play was given.

Mr. Rubinstein does not control among his gifts the hard brilliancy of the Irish dramatist but he is quite as disrespectful to the institutions of society. Nothing that his play reveals is half so true as the identity of Jewish and Gentile character once they are confronted with the rewards of this life. Their prejudices, even their religions, fall in the face of the least worthy material rewards. Everything is sacrificed to the good things of this life, quite readily and suddenly sacrificed, even after the most profound and loving declarations of principle. In revealing this phase of human nature, Mr. Rubinstein is at his best.

Of course there is little illusion of reality about the proceedings in "Consequences." Nothing appears to happen particularly because it is the logical sequence of events but rather because the author means that it should prove his point. The marriage of the wrong couple at the registrar's office is, for instance, of the domain of burlesque. So are other scenes in the play. So are scenes invariably in all the comedies of the Shavian school. When it comes to imparting interest to talk without the slightest shred of dramatic interest, the only substitute is to exaggerate the actions and emotions of comic characters until burlesque is the inevitable result. So there is some of that quality in Mr. Rubinstein's refreshing and delightful comedy.

The Jew or the Gentile who goes to see the play need not laugh over the temporary discomfiture of his antagonist. He laughs last who laughs best. And the author of "Consequences" has revealed the weakness of both races with a delicately satirical touch as potent as it is unprejudiced.

It is delightful to find in "The Hawk" a play of life and emotion seen through the eyes of a practical playwright; not a play with a thesis, which usually means nowadays a thesis and nothing more, although its delivery in the theatre possesses certain qualities, such as dialogue, division into acts and other accidental characteristics of a drama; or a visualization of the effects of diseases on the human system. Francis de Croisset has collected in the play which is just now such a genuine success at the Shubert Theatre some of the feverish emotional blood of the French plays that came here in such numbers years ago. His form is modern, and in that respect an improvement over the work of the men who wrote "Article 47," "Alixe," "Le Fils de Corolie," "Led Astray" and the rest of that tearful catalogue. Yet the thrills came more rapidly in them, and the tears seemed to have somewhat better excuse for their silent flow in the old plays.

In the meantime the public has shown its gratitude for the novelty, and Mr. Faversham, in view for his present success, probably is reconciled to the necessity of abandoning temporarily his excursions into the field of Shakespeare. The role of the gambling husband is admirably suited to him. There is a touch of the exotic in this passionate Hungarian, devoted altogether to the wife for whom he sacrifices even his inherited honor. This extravagance Mr. Faversham very strikingly depicts and makes the florid, highly colored adventurer a dominating figure in the play. He has rarely been better suited in a modern role. Mlle. Dorziat's acting with him has already been praised, but it is altogether pardonable to repeat the pleasure that her novel personality gives to the representation.

It is curious that George Broadhurst should have been in the slightest degree tempted to deal with "Innocent," which he is said to have adapted for the local stage. There is nothing in that Hungarian product even remotely resembling his own dramatic methods. In fact there is little that is dramatic in "Innocent." A young girl goes to Budapest with a guardian, he falls in love with her, she looks for other and richer lovers and the man kills himself when she finds them in plenty. To have made this material dramatic there should have been some motive for the girl's getting out of Mukden. She should have only pretended innocence and been in reality wicked—which she promptly showed herself to be—or she should have been misled by the advice of another into departing for Budapest with this guardian, whom she might also have loved already. Any change in her state of mind to make it different from what it appeared to the other characters in the play would have accomplished its purpose and sowed the dramatic germ at once. As it is, one has to wait in "Innocent" until she plots to leave her lover for the slightest beat of the dramatic pulse.

This is not of course the method of Mr. Broadhurst. He tightens the strings at the outset, involves his characters in a mesh and plies them with every additional agony with as much composure as the Germans drop their bombs on the cities of France. He allows for comic relief at all times, however, and the tighter he has drawn the bonds about his victims the more daring may his humor become. This way of workmanship was very well displayed in "The Law of the Land" at the Forty-eighth Street Theatre the other night. Just when the agonies of the little group in that play were at their worst the dialogue between the inspector of police and the butler kept the audience in constant laughter and brought the play to a triumphant end with as satisfying a last act as any melodrama, drawing room or otherwise, ever possessed.

For its purpose, which is to provide interesting stage plays, we much prefer the method of Mr. Broadhurst to that which the original author of "Innocent" employed. "The Law of the Land," even with its reeking first act, is much better drama than any part of the Hungarian play in spite of its pretentious assumption of character study and a revelation of the powers of heredity. Many scenes in "The Law of the Land" are really of deep dramatic interest.

MRS. CAMPBELL IS COMING.

And the Liebler Company Wants the Fact Known.

The return of Mrs. Patrick Campbell to America after an absence of five years is interesting in view of the fact that she was introduced to American audiences by the same management who are presenting her in "Pygmalion," the new Bernard Shaw play at the Park Theatre, on October 12.

Mrs. Campbell's first American tour was in 1901-02. A London critic heralded her coming to America in a very unfortunate way. Deploring the fact that Mrs. Campbell, the exponent of Pinero, Maeterlinck and Sudermann, should vitiate her artistic genius with the atmosphere of plebeian America, he declared that for an English actress of such distinction to present to the American public intellectual plays was a waste of her ability. Naturally the American critics responded in an equally cordial spirit, and Mrs. Campbell upon her arrival in this country found herself compelled to combat the false impressions which her overzealous countryman had created for her.

Although this occurred some fourteen years ago it marks an era in the progress of the American stage because it was the final realization that the American theatregoer was quite as sensitive to the highest forms of artistic drama then as now. During Mrs. Campbell's American tour her selection of plays was more or less gloomy, gruesome and unfamiliar to the American theatregoer. Notwithstanding this fact, however, on the ground of her beauty and her interpretation Mrs. Campbell made a great impression and a favorable one upon the American theatregoers for her faithful artistic purpose. Her first American season was one of the greatest financial successes the Liebler Company ever had.

Mrs. Campbell was one of the pioneers in causing the influx of foreign plays and players that has since come to our theatres. Her prospect of presenting to the American public the latest play by one of the most brilliant of the world's dramatists, G. Bernard Shaw, sustains Mrs. Campbell's reputation with American theatregoers. While the chief effect of "Pygmalion" will be to reveal Mrs. Campbell as a comedienne, the deeper significance of tragic note is touched in the end of the play. Its success at His Majesty's Theatre in London was financially great.

NEW YORK'S NEW STAGE FIGURE

In securing the services of Joseph Urban, the Viennese artist, to prepare the fantastic scenes of Edward Sheldon's spectacle "The Garden of Paradise," the Liebler Company aims to accomplish an artistic production unequalled in America since the spectacles at the New Theatre. Mr. Sheldon's dramatic adaptation of Hans Christian Andersen's "The Little Mermaid" calls for eleven scenes. The success of the production depends upon an artist who could by reading Mr. Sheldon's manuscript visualize the author's purpose.

Early last spring George C. Tyler heard of the stage pictures painted by Mr. Urban for the Boston Opera Company. He went to Boston and saw Urban's production of "Monna Vanna" and "Don Giovanni." He lost no time in making a contract with Mr. Urban to create the stage pictures of "The Garden of Paradise" at the Park Theatre in New York. His return the other day on an emigrant ship from Italy assures a production of this play.

Urban, who is the apostle of a new stagecraft, bean his career in an architect's office in Vienna, which is his home. He designed, built and furnished many public buildings before he came to the United States. The Abdin Palace of the Khedive of Egypt was finished and decorated by him. He designed the Czar's bridge across the River Neva at St. Petersburg. For several years he was the chief artistic adviser to the Imperial Opera House in Vienna, where he designed the settings for plays, including Maeterlinck's "The Blue Bird." In an article published in the *Century Magazine* recently a writer has described his artistic identity:

"For a positive faith the new stage craft puts imagination before everything else. To take a new view, an impassioned view and to record it fearlessly, that was its first duty. Many qualities hitherto little appreciated in scenic design came to its aid. There was simplicity, for instance. The stage was not to be cluttered with meaningless detail. Every property was to have its use, each stretch of wall to express the one thing for which it stood. The results were productions of calm design, and broad surfaces, stronger, sincerer, more direct and so more beautiful.

"Then there was suggestion. It crept out of simplicity. A touch or two of Eastern decoration on a flat wall summoned more of the Orient than acres of carved filigree.

"A third quality gave aid from the other arts, impressionism. The artist in scenic design, like the artist in oils, created an atmosphere of reality, not reality itself, the impression of things, not crude, literal representations. Flakes of color, here and there, brought a unity of beauty. All these elements of the new stagecraft have appeared in Mr. Urban's American work.

"Mr. Urban carries us still further out of the old make believe world of the opera house by his novel use of platforms. Many of the rooms in 'Pelleas' were raised two or three feet above the footlights. As a consequence the settings seemed smaller, more intimate.

"But it is the secret of his effective living colors that makes his walls look like something besides flapping canvas. He applies his color by the method known as 'pointillage'—a method known to all artists and used more or less by the majority. Unlike the conventional scene painter, he does not try to make a coating of glutinous paint and some shreds of canvas look like rocks or air. He follows the modern artist, daubs a fleck of color here, another there, and achieves a total effect that is as suggestive of reality as is any painting by Monet, and hence in the same degree beautiful. And the many flecks of color carry all the prismatic glory of natural light.

"Mr. Urban's method of work is curious and interesting; his studio distinctive. One finds him a largish man of early middle age, with vaguely Teutonic features touched by something of the East, the Viennese.

"After a reading of the score and the libretto to fix impressions he lays out the ground plan of each scene. It is an accurate map of how much space must be used on the stage and of the general conformation of the buildings. Next he makes his sketch of the scene, a smallish but very accurate drawing in color of what the stage will look like from the director's chair. From the ground plan and the sketch expert scene painters construct and color an accurate little model of the scene. This goes back to the designer. If some detail or color needs correction he alters it on the model. From this corrected model the scene painters produce the finished setting.

"From his work he might seem a most individual artist, a man whose achievement is built on the unhampered use of exceptional talents. In reality his results spring from definite aims and are backed by a strict philosophy of his art. He is not the egotist displaying chance moods."

EDESON'S GOOD INTENTIONS.

With the production of "Apartment 309" at the Palace Theatre last week Robert Edeson will begin a campaign of his own for widening the American theatre. Even in vaudeville the dramatic sketch will be benefited by the method of acting inculcated by Mr. Edeson at rehearsals, and he hopes later to produce a play along the same lines. He says the art of acting is everywhere professionalized in spirit.

"Each actor," he says, "feels that his part has been written to reveal his abilities, and the whole performance, when there is a whole and not a mere collection of parts, is so submitted to tradition that it holds the audience at arm's length instead of being an action in which the audience shares. This must be broken down by the [illegible] simplicity and directness on the part of the actors. No player should try to stand outside the frame, no traditions should be followed, but the spirit and letter of each text should be revealed as completely, as naturally and as harmoniously as possible."

In "Apartment 309" and in subsequent dramatic productions Mr. Edeson will lay every emphasis upon the freshness, justness and intimacy of the action. For he has the laudable ambition to "decabotiniser l'acteur," which literally translated means that he hopes to free the actor from his characteristics as a strolling player, but, more spiritually rendered, means that he wants to raise actors from professionalized entertainers, or "personalities," to cooperating interpreters of works of art.

Thereby he hoped to accustom them to the reading of lines quietly and simply, as though intimately to a friend, instead of declaiming them as to a body of admirers.